

Those who watch the popular cable television series "Intervention", which follows the real life trials of ordinary people struggling to overcome often life-threatening dependencies, have probably wondered if the show's producers shouldn't devote an episode to curbing Washington's addiction to deficit spending. Speaker John Boehner and House Budget Committee chairman Paul Ryan are already leading such an intervention on Capitol Hill.

Last November, Americans signaled to Congress that the days of binge spending are over. While conservative lawmakers got that message, it appears our president and many of his supporters in Congress are still living in denial.

On April 13, President Obama delivered a speech renouncing government overspending and pledging to make amends by reducing the deficit by \$4 trillion over 12 years. It's great to hear the president finally acknowledge that our government has a spending problem. But pardon us, Mr. President, if we need a bit more convincing that you're ready to cast off your spending habit.

The president's declaration of war on deficit spending comes a mere 59 days after he introduced his bloated \$3.73 trillion FY2012 budget, which would grow federal red ink by a record \$1.65 trillion. That budget was dead on arrival in the U.S. House, where Congressman Paul Ryan introduced a budget blueprint on behalf of House Republicans that reduces the deficit by \$4.4 trillion over a decade.

Meanwhile, the president's second budget proposal in two months now claims to actually reduce the deficit with the assistance of major tax increases – or as he termed them, "spending reductions in the tax code." In contrast, Chairman Ryan's budget takes a path that is closer to what many Americans prefer – cutting spending to the tune of \$6.2 trillion over ten years without raising taxes.

The president's April 13 address – which was cobbled together in response to the Ryan budget – was disappointing not only for its reliance on the same tired old liberal playbook of tax hikes, but his speech was also highly political. Frankly, I felt the president acted in a manner that was beneath his office by attacking Chairman Ryan, who sat in the audience as a guest. Our country is grappling with a looming debt crisis and political theater only fuels the perception that the president isn't serious about deficit reduction.

On April 15, the House officially endorsed Chairman Ryan's budget plan, known as the "Path to Prosperity", passing it by a 235 to 193 margin. I was pleased to support this budget proposal, which not only sets government on a long-term path of lower spending, but also eliminates roughly \$800 billion in tax increases imposed by the president's health care law.

Another major difference between the Ryan "Path to Prosperity" budget and President Obama's proposal is how they address the long-term survivability of entitlement programs, such as Medicare. The Ryan plan, supported by House Republicans, saves entitlement programs for future generations, while not changing benefits for those of age 55 and older. "The Path to Prosperity" would control Medicare costs through personal choice and competition.

Meanwhile, the president's plan simply ignores the funding challenges that threaten entitlements, placing the programs in peril within a decade. Instead, he would continue his plans to impose more health care rationing and price controls under the health care law.

As is the president's preferred style, he has chosen to take to town hall meetings and political rallies rather than meet with Congressional leaders to hammer out a serious deficit reduction plan. Speaking last week at a Facebook-sponsored event, he called the Ryan budget plan "radical" and "not courageous."

With all due respect, Mr. President, it was House Republicans who first offered a plan to significantly cut federal spending. Only after Congressman Ryan stepped forward with a bold strategy to tackle the crippling national debt – a plan that was praised by the leaders of your own deficit commission – did you finally offer a highly political speech with pledges to cut the deficit.

Given the lack of focus and attention to our debt crisis by the White House, it is no wonder that Standard and Poors – a leading independent provider of credit ratings - last week threatened to lower the United States' top AAA rating. Americans expect their leaders in Washington to put the country's fiscal house in order and so do our creditors.

Mr. President, it's time to dispense with the political games, and finally do what the people sent

us here to accomplish. Let's pass a serious plan to cut our debt and let's do it soon.

My staff and I work for you. If we can ever be of service, do not hesitate to call my office toll free at 1-800-288-8721.